

Yatta Kiazolu Wins the DSU Constitution & Citizenship Speech Tourney

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Yatta Kiazolu, a DSU senior history major from Smyrna, recently won the Delaware State University 2011 Constitution and Citizenship Speech Tournament held Sept. 29 on campus.

Ms. Kiazolu, a native of Botswana, South African, has resided in the United States since 1997 and is a 2008 graduate of Smyrna High School. She took 1st Place in the tournament – which is held in recognition of the annual Constitution Day observance – with her speech “The Dream Act,” which focuses on the importance of educational opportunities for immigrant children, regardless of their immigration status.

“I am fortunate to be here in a legal status, but because I recognize the importance of education, to see a large population be educationally denied is wrong,” said Ms. Kiazolu, who plans to go to law school and aspires to be an immigration and human rights lawyer. “Undocumented immigrant children can go to elementary and high school, but it is harder from them to go on to college because they can’t apply for financial aid. They therefore can’t fulfill their dreams and contribution unless they can pay their tuition out of their pocket.”

The following is her winning speech in its entirety:

The Dream Act

President John F. Kennedy once said “Let us think of education as the means of developing our greatest abilities, because in each of us there is a private hope and dream which, fulfilled, can be translated into benefit for everyone and greater strength for our nation.” As citizens, legal immigrants, and foreign students in the United States, we had and continue to have *fundamental* rights to our education. So, I ask you to consider the 2.1 million children and young adults that reside in the U.S. as undocumented immigrants whose fundamental right to higher education has been denied. Every year, 65,000 young adults, of this population graduate from high school and face the tremendous obstacle of furthering their education or joining the military. The vast majority of these students were brought to the US illegitimately by their parents through *no* fault of their own. These positive and determined students contribute incredibly to the American society through their willingness to serve the nation that has afforded them so much. As human beings, none of us were given the option to choose our nation of birth, our economic sphere, or even the overall circumstances in our life. It follows that the same is true for these children and young adults. I urge each of you as beneficiaries of the US education system and as agents of change with great influence over public policy; we *must* stand behind these students and aggressively push for the enactment of the DREAM Act.

The DREAM Act, formally known as the Development Relief and Education of Alien Minors Act is a piece of bipartisan legislation that aims to create a pathway to citizenship for undocumented alien minors and provides a way to join the military or receive a college education. They will be able to continue making great contributions to this society and utilize their skills and talents. In addition to supporting Human Rights, there are three significant reasons *we* must advocate for the enactment of the DREAM Act:

- It allows these newly legalized immigrants to invest in the U.S. economy. Opponents maintain that the

DREAM Act is expensive; however, the degrees these students will receive will allow them to contribute and estimated \$1.4 trillion to \$3.6 trillion in taxable income.

- It makes the U.S. competitive in the global economy. The US is currently ranked 12th in world in the number of college graduates, according to the College Board Policy and Advocacy Center.
- It allows the Department of Homeland Security to focus their energy on deporting criminal aliens and others that pose a threat to the U.S. The process requires that *all* applicants to be subject to rigorous criminal and background checks and reviews.

In summation, we cannot stand by and allow for talent in such a large and *growing* demographic to go undeveloped, especially when the U.S. is in such a weak global position. In danger of being the first generation to be less educated than our parents, there can be no more inaction on our part. *WE* will suffer the consequences or reap the benefits. Each of you can support the DREAM Act by contacting your State Representative's office and urging him or her to co-sponsor Senate Bill 952. We must act *now*, strengthen the U.S. economy, redirect Department of Homeland Security resources to locating and deporting aliens that threaten the US security, and increasing this country's ability to compete globally.

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